

# THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

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## Camera ruling limited, city says

Printing of red-light tickets will move to Spokane

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### Fast fact

Eleven cameras monitor seven Spokane intersections, and three more intersections are getting them.

Red-light runners caught on camera in Spokane shouldn't automatically expect a break from a recent court ruling rejecting the city's method for issuing tickets.

A city official says they'd have to challenge the legality in court, too.

City Attorney Howard Delaney said Monday that Spokane County Superior Court Judge Jerome Leveque's decision affects only the three tickets that were included in the court case. Other motorists who received tickets under the automated system will need to bring their own court challenge before their \$124 tickets could be invalidated, Delaney said.

"It's probably more trouble than it's worth, frankly," Delaney said.

Delaney said he plans to ask Leveque to review his decision that the method of electronically affixing a Spokane police officer's signature to a ticket in Arizona before mailing it to the car's registered owner is illegal. Delaney emphasized that Leveque hasn't yet issued a written opinion but said the city will appeal if necessary.

Delaney said he expects Leveque's decision to be reversed, but added that the city has halted the printing of tickets in Arizona and is preparing for production in Spokane.

He described the change as minor.

"We don't expect a large impact, and this should go fairly smoothly," Delaney said.

Leveque's decision Friday that the out-of-state signature printing was illegal overturns a previous ruling by Municipal County Judge Mary Logan. The case began last fall when attorney John Clark, then attorney Dean Chuang, argued that state law requires signatures under penalty of perjury must be written in Washington.

Under the previous system, tickets were mailed to car owners after a police officer reviewed images from the cameras and decided whether the light was red before the car proceeded into the intersection.

A Spokane police officer reviews the images and notifies the Arizona-based American Traffic Solutions of infractions, which mails the tickets after affixing the officer's signature in Arizona.

All cities in Washington that have red-light cameras use the same printing system, Delaney said.

Delaney briefed the Spokane Public Safety Committee on Leveque's decision and the city's response during its monthly meeting on Monday. City officials spoke with officials from American Traffic Solutions earlier Monday to discuss plans to move printing to Spokane.

The city of Spokane began the red-light camera program in 2008. Cameras are equipped at seven intersections, with three more scheduled to begin operating soon at westbound Second Avenue at Walnut Street, southbound Maple Street at Second and southbound Third Avenue at Browne Street. An additional camera will monitor southbound Thor Street at Second.

Mayor Mary Verner proposed using \$400,000 in red-light camera revenue as part of a financial package to hire six police officers.

The city receives about \$500,000 a year from red-light camera tickets. The extra cameras are expected to increase annual revenue by \$250,000.

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